

## CHAPTER XI

### PREPARATIONS FOR AFRICAN TRIP— REFLECTIONS AFTER TAFT'S ELECTION

His African trip, which he was to enter upon after retiring from the Presidency, was much in Roosevelt's mind during the last year of his term and many references to it appear in his letters. To Lord Curzon, in England, who had asked him to deliver the Romanes lecture, at Oxford, he wrote on August 18, 1908:

"I can think of few things which I would rather do than deliver the Romanes lecture. I accept with pleasure, and if Oxford desires to give me a degree I shall be much pleased to receive it. Indeed, your letter relieves me from rather a quandary. Next March, immediately after leaving the Presidency, I shall go to Africa, starting in at Mombasa, working to and fro in British, and perhaps in German, East Africa, and coming out via the Xyanza and the Nile at Cairo about the first of April following. Now there are many friends whom I have in England whom I should really like to see; but I have rather a horror of ex-Presidents traveling around with no real business, and thereby putting unfortunate potentates who think they ought to show courtesy to the United States in a position where they feel obliged to entertain the said ex-Presidents, no matter how great a hero any one of them may be. If I could make the sovereigns and leading men of each country understand that I did not expect any attention and would be only too glad to be left to my own resources, and be permitted to call upon the people I already knew and a very few others whom

I would like to know, why, that would be all  
right; but to  
make a kind of mock triumphal procession  
would offer about  
as unattractive an outing to me as could be  
imagined.<sup>15</sup>